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Editorial: Pence 2016? Time will tell

Will he, or won't he?

The amount of speculation surrounding Indiana Republican Gov. Mike Pence's intentions regarding a possible presidential run in 2016 has been growing steadily over the past few weeks. For his part, Pence has refused to be pinned down, despite giving off strong signals.

In an Associated Press story we published on our website Aug. 29, Pence said he was "sympathetic" to the idea of the next president being a governor, but "did not offer any hints about whether he would seek the Republican nomination in 2016."

The same day, Pence joined other potential GOP ticket hopefuls, including Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, in addressing the Americans for Prosperity summit in Dallas. The political advocacy group is bankrolled by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch. This is not insignificant as the super-rich siblings are major contributors to conservative candidates, including Pence.

"The Koch machine has gotten behind Pence's governorship, and Pence headlined a June fundraiser for the New York state Republican Party

sponsored by David Koch,” reported Politico’s Kenneth P. Vogel and Maggie Haberman on Aug. 28. “He and his brother Charles gave Pence \$200,000 for his 2012 governor’s race. And, once he was in office and began pushing a major income tax cut, Americans for Prosperity rallied support for it and privately took credit for helping pass it into law.”

After Texas, Pence made his first trip as governor to the political hotbed of Iowa. The state’s first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses aren’t scheduled until Feb. 1, 2016, but Pence has spent the past few days making his presence felt in The Hawkeye State.

“Pence, who will attend a meeting of the Midwest-U.S. Japan Association Conference and speak at a fundraiser for Gov. Terry Branstad while in Iowa, is staying quiet for now,” reported Tom LoBianco of The Associated Press on Sunday. “‘I’m not going to Iowa for the reason you think,’ he quipped.”

While he certainly looks like a hopeful national politician making all the necessary rounds, only Pence knows whether he’s planning a run for the highest office. But after all this flirtation, it’d almost be a surprise if he didn’t.